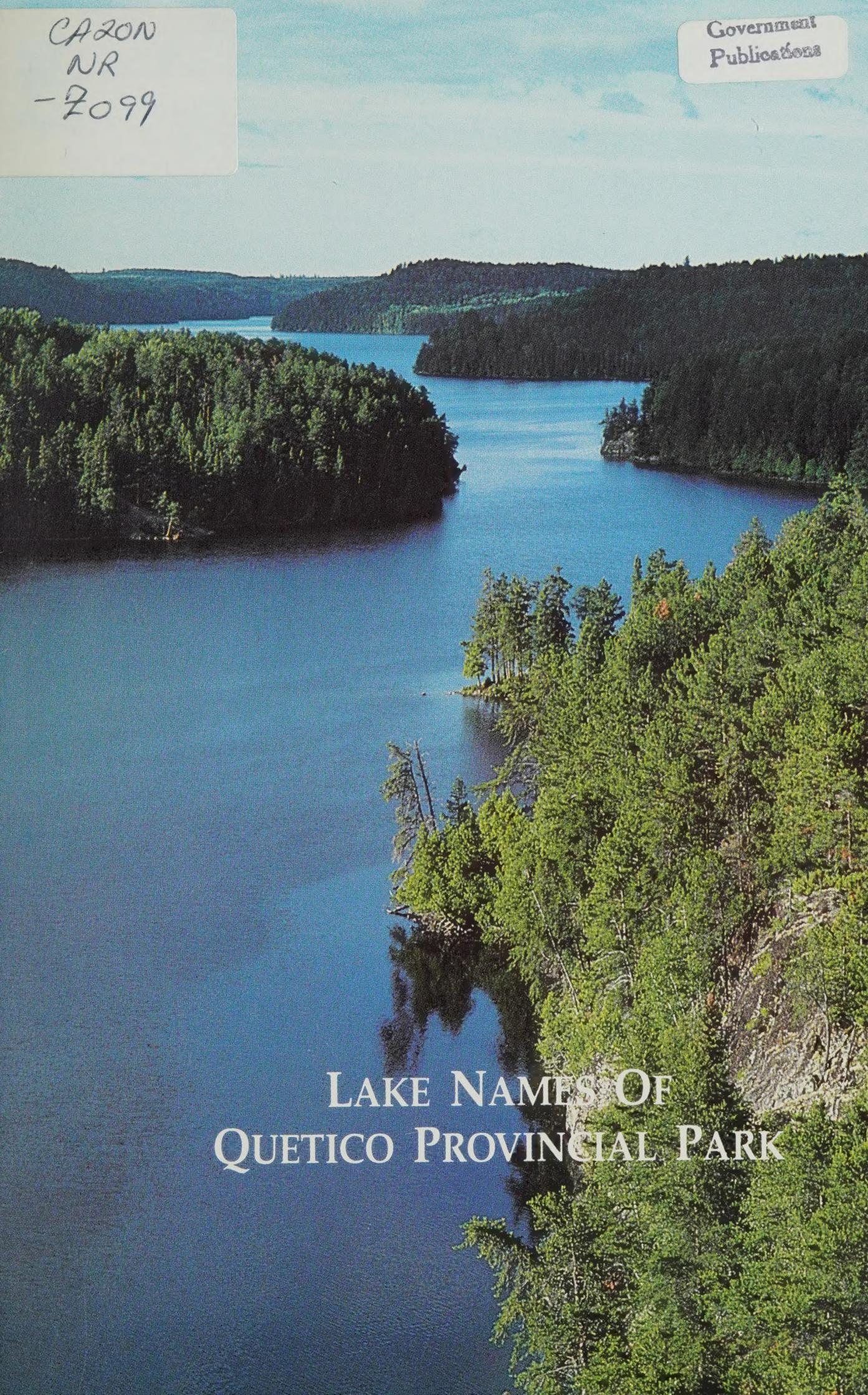


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LAKE NAMES OF  
QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK

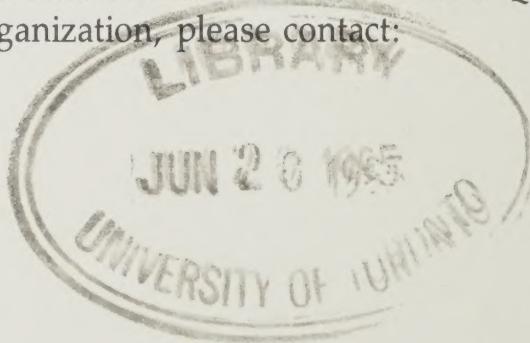
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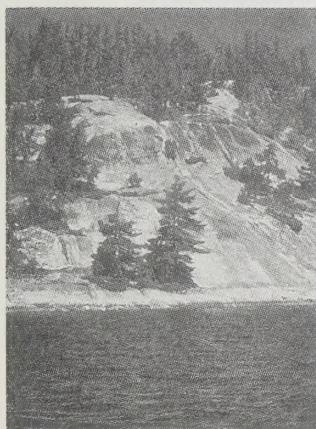
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### THE FRIENDS OF QUETICO PARK

The Friends of Quetico Park is a non-profit, charitable organization conceived in 1984 to actively assist in the preservation of Quetico Park as a region of outstanding geological, biological, cultural, and recreational significance. Produced by the Friends of Quetico Park, in co-operation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, this publication is one in a series of booklets designed to further the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the wilderness that is Quetico. For further information about our organization, please contact:

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Quetico is a wilderness park which preserves an area of great natural value and historical significance. Its vast network of interconnected waterways, covering more than 4,662 square kilometres, makes Quetico one of the finest canoeing areas on the entire North American continent. The land was originally set aside in 1909 as a Forest Reserve following the establishment of the Superior National Forest across the border in Minnesota; subsequently in 1913, it was designated a provincial park.

## LAKE NAMES

The Man Chain, Cache Bay, Trant, Agnes, Wink, and Baptism are some of the many names in Quetico whose origins continue to be a mystery. However, the origins of many names in Quetico are known. The wide variety of lake names reflect the diversity of both its landscape and human history. The rich biological heritage is reflected in the many places named after plants and animals. The cultural legacy is apparent in Ojibwe and French words; names of bush pilots, surveyors, soldiers, loggers, and park rangers are from a more recent era.

# OJIBWE NAMES

The Ojibwe are the most recent group of Indian people to live here, and their culture is rooted in this coniferous forest belt. They were described in the Jesuit Relations in 1640 and this is the source of their major name for over a century — “Saulteux”. Those described were camping at the “Sault” — “rapids” between Lake Superior and Lake Huron because of the excellent fishing. Always in the spring, the Ojibwe groups gathered at the best “Sault” throughout the Shield Country. At the SW corner of Quetico, Snake Falls was such a place. Here sturgeon were speared in the rushing waters, later to be smoked and dried over racks along the shore. Why the sturgeon was called “Snake” is buried in the legends of these people. As a source of food, it is said to have been as important to the Woodland peoples as the buffalo was to the Plain’s people. By the time the Boundary Survey party passed here in 1823, they referred to this place as “Rattlesnake Falls”. Over the years, meanings change and stories mingle and Snake Falls has much it could tell of snakes and of sturgeon.

One of the earliest forms of their own name was “Baouichitigouian”, the equivalent of the modern “Bawatigouininiwak” which literally means “Rapid’s People” or “People of the Falls or Rapids”. “Outchibouec”, the source of the later English “Ojibwa”, is also an early name for them. In the 17th century, the meaning was usually rendered as “to roast until puckered up.” This refers to the puckered seams of their moccasins. No other tribe had such moccasins. “Chippewa” is a version of “Ojibwe” and was officially adopted in publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology. In referring to themselves, they used the term “Anicinabek” (men) or “Anicinabe” (man). Hunting people develop good visual discrimination, and as an aid to travel, they named distinctive features of the landscape, and these later served to help guide the French, English and settlers through the area.

## Quetico Lake

Quetico Lake comes from the Ojibwe “Gwe ta ming” — “bad, dangerous”. There is a host of connected meanings, relating to the nature of the lake from a canoeist’s point-of-view. One Ojibwe lady said it meant that it was better to travel along the shore, the way the Indians used to do. You can observe so many things. The white man goes right down the middle, exposed to danger, and seeing little. There is a story that Quetico came from a very old Ojibwe word with mythological significance. It had been borrowed from the Cree language, and described a benevolent spirit, whose presence was felt strongly in places of great beauty like Quetico Lake.

Ernest Oberholtzer, in 1964, described Quetico thus to Bruce Litteljohn (Park Historian). "In 1909, Quetico seemed to be a primitive country, a wonderful place, and it was no wonder the Indians had traditions and felt spirits in there. It had a spirituality. You felt you were in a kind of magic land." He said the word "Quetico was a very old, old word. The French were searching for a route to the Pacific — "Quete de la cote". Some say this became "Quetico".

## Ahsin Bay

Ahsin Bay, of Payne Lake is from the Ojibwe meaning "rock". It was named by Selwyn Dewdney, an outstanding researcher of Indian Rock Paintings in Canada. Indirectly, it was named for his son, Peter (from Greek meaning "rock"). Selwyn already had an appreciation of Ojibwe terminology and naming custom. He found a most beautiful cliff with Indian paintings on this lake.

## Amik Lake

Amik is Ojibwe meaning beaver.

## Batchewaung Lake

Batchewaung is from the Ojibwe, "O ba tchi wan", meaning "a current going through narrows" as it does out of the Lake and also out of the Bay.

## Bitchu Lake

Bitchu is Cree meaning Lynx.

## Kahshahpiwi Lake

Kahshahpiwi is from Ojibwe "Ga-sha-bwi-we-ga-mag" which means that "the lake flows through continuously" and describes the route — a straight trail right through Hunter Island.

## Kasakokwog Lake

Kasakokwog was Kawsacokquog on an 1884 map. This means, in Ojibwe, "scrub bush". This is not very true of the lake today, reminding us that the forest changes. The name Ann appeared on a map of 1913.

## Kawnipi Lake

Kawnipi Lake has many spellings. Among them are Kaninipiminanikok, Konipunanikek, Konepiminanikok, Kahnipiminaniko and Konepiminanekok. From Robt. Readman, Quetico Ranger, 1909 - 1911 we received the spelling, "Kaw-ni--pi-mi-nani-kok or Kanipinanikok" — "where there are cranberries" (meaning high bush cranberries) and the information that the "lake was the Indian's hunting ground for moose and ducks, and, in the late summer, they dried and smoked the meat for winter use".

## Keewatin Lake

Keewatin Lake is Kiwedin meaning "where the north wind is from". This was also named by Selwyn Dewdney.

## Namakan River

Namakan River flows out of Lac la Croix, and touching the south-west boundary of Quetico, this river, with its many rapids, was usually avoided in favour of the Beatty Portage and the Loon River. On May 31, 1830, the bride of Hudson's Bay Co. Governor, George Simpson, writes of this place. "Crossed one of its bays (Lac la Croix) and descended the river, Michan, which is not the usual route, but much shorter; yet seldom, or never, passed by Whites, being considered dangerous." It is from the Ojibwe word "Me can" — meaning "Sturgeon", and appears on maps as Namakan, Namekan, Namaukan, or Nameukan, and refers to a place where there are many sturgeon. That was once true of this river.

## Omeme Lake

Omeme Lake is an Ojibwe word which means pigeon, likely the extinct passenger pigeon. Until 1870 or later, passenger pigeons were common throughout Minnesota. They arrived early in April, for breeding, and migrated south in October and November. About 1900, they became scarce and then extinct. On August 9, 1797, David Thompson wrote "many flocks of wild pigeons fly past near Curtain Falls".

## Saganaga Lake

Saganaga, claims an Ojibwe friend, is a white man's way of pronouncing "Sa ga i gun", the Ojibwe word which means an inland lake. This is most likely Lac Sesakinaga, on the first known map of the way west. It was drawn by the Indian, Ochagach, for La Verendrye, who was at that time (1728), at a post in Nipigon country. David Thompson mapped it as "Kaseiganagah". Gilfillan wrote it as "Ga-sasuganagag sagaiigun", "the lake surrounded by thick forests that bewilder". In 1823, Delafield of the Boundary Survey, reached the lake on July 20 at 4 p.m., "Thence pass into Lake Saganaga which means Lake of Bays. This is a large lake, and contains, by Mr. Ferguson's surveys, 289 islands. In my passage through it I could form no idea of the size or direction of the lake, it was so glutted with islands, both large and small." Mackenzie, in his journals, says it takes its name from its numerous islands.

## Saganagons Lake

Some say "onse" is a diminutive, meaning "little". In 1857, H.Y. Hind writes "The Little Seiganagah is a favourite wintering place of numerous families of Indians; it abounds in fish and near its shores the winter road to Fort William runs". The family of Jack Powell came to live at the east end of this lake in the early 1900s. Jack and his wife (who was from the Lac la Croix Indian village) raised their family there. He taught the boys to read and write and she taught them the skills of her people. One of their sons, Frank, says that Saganagons is the white man's version of the Ojibwe, "Kaw-gog-ah-min-e-sains-e-gok", meaning "A group of islands all attached together down the middle of the lake — like beads strung together", and so it seems to be, on Saganagons.

## Wawiag River

Wawiag River was named "Kawawiagamok" on maps from 1890 and 1898. In Ojibwe "Wawiagama" means a round lake; one of the headwaters of the Wawiag, Burchell Lake, is known as Round Lake on older maps. The large bay where the Wawiag enters Kawnipi is known as Kawa Bay, likely a shortened form of "Kawawiagamok".

The Ojibwe names tend to be very descriptive and in some cases, the present name of the lake is merely a translation of the traditional Ojibwe name.

## Beaverhouse Lake

Beaverhouse Lake was known to the Ojibwe as "Missemcoish" or "Big Beaver Lake". From the front of the entry station, the sky-line along the southwest shore traces the shape of a beaver. Billie Magee (Ojibwe guide) told Ernest Oberholtzer in 1909 that the lake was named on account of the immense rock bluffs resembling beaverhouses.

## Blackstone Lake

Blackstone Lake was named after the eloquent Ojibwe chief Magatewasin (Blackstone) who argued so well for the rights of his people that he was compared to a famous English jurist, Sir Wm. Blackstone (1723-1780). Blackstone was appointed by the people at the height of land to represent them at the negotiations for Treaty 3 in 1873. He became the chief at the Lac la Croix reserve until his death in 1884. A daughter married the son of Chief Kabaigon of Kawa Bay Reserve.

## Ottertrack Lake

Ottertrack Lake is an English translation from the Ojibwe "ni gik" — "otter", "gi-bi-mi-ga-wi" — "where his tracks are visible". It is noted in Gilfillan "the lake where the otter makes tracks" from four tracks of an otter, in the rock of a cliff, by the side of the lake, as if he had jumped four times there. The cliff is on the north shore of the lake, about halfway between Monument and Little Knife Portages. It was regarded by the Ojibwe as a special place.

## Pickerel Lake

Pickerel Lake was known to the Indians as "Kaogassikok". Fur trade journals sometimes called this lake "Dore" and a journal from 1831 referred to it as the "lake of the Golden Fishes". All of these names are thought to refer to the yellow pickerel or walleye (ogaw).

## Sturgeon Lake

Sturgeon was known by the Ojibwe as "Ka-nem-e-gok", the "place of many sturgeon".

Occasionally, the Ojibwe name of the lake was translated to French and known by the French name during the Fur Trade. The French appellation was subsequently anglicized to its present form.

## Crooked Lake

Crooked Lake in Ojibwe is "Ga-wa-gi-ga-mag", translated into French to appear on early maps as "Lac la Croche". One member of the Boundary Survey in 1823 called it "Crooked Lake" and another called it "Lake Croche". On July 23 of that year, Delafield of the Survey wrote "Crooked Lake is entirely filled with islands. We are, once more, lost". July 24 — "Embark again — shortly after sunrise. Conclude to return to the Indians for a guide over this lake, and, when on the way, meet with a hunting party, and take one of them along as a guide. He, together with a boy of 10 or 11, accompanies us in their little canoes of about 10 feet and are able to keep ahead of my canoe with its seven paddles. The Indians use very wide blade paddles and the North canoemen very small ones. The Indian paddles slowly and the Canadian quickly. My old guide is much mortified that another should be employed, but it would have been very strange had he known the track through this well-named lake, not having been here for 20 year".

Mr. Bill Zupp, who used to have a lodge on the American side of the lake, tells why the bays are named as they are. It seems that people were lost all day Thursday, in Thursday Bay, and so on, until on Sunday, Sunday Bay led them to Curtain Falls. Various points about the lake are known by name. A short distance downstream from Lower Basswood Falls in "a narrow straight with high granitic ridges — on the left side is a high perpendicular granite cliff rendered famous by the circumstance of it having in a fissure of the rock between 20' - 30' from the water, a number of arrows, said to have been shot there by a war party of the Sioux, when on an excursion against the Sauters or Chippewa. The party had advanced thus far, and not finding an enemy, shot their arrows in the fissure, as well to show that they had been there, as to convince them of their deadly aim. The fissure presents an opening of 2", and there may be seen still the feather ends of about 20 arrows driven nearly to the end — the traveller has left his mark on this rock in various ways, some by name, and some by date, and some by strange device" (pictographs). (Delafield)

David Thompson noted the Picture Rock as early as 1797. He dates the reputed visit of the Sioux as 1730. In 1736, Sioux Indians killed the son of La Verendrye and his companions on Lake of the Woods. Thompson

writes "its renown is due, not only to its painted hieroglyphics, but, more especially, to its history". Many unique Indian rock paintings are on this "remarkable rock with a smooth face, but split and cracked in different parts, which hang over the water" (Alexander Mackenzie). Further along the south shore is "Table Rock" called by David Thompson "Millstone Rock". Nature provides a table said to have been used by the fur traders, and by the Sioux and Ojibwe as a meeting place after one of their many wars.

## Knife Lake

Knife Lake was Mogomon (sagaigun). It described a rock formation there; "a blue-black, fine grained, siliceous rock, approaching flint in hardness, and compactness, with conchoidal fracture and sharp edges". Sometimes it is nearly black. It was this sharp-edged rock that gave Knife Lake its name. This rock is only local, in beds, or sometimes in ridges, and is called "siltstone". It was worked by the Indians, who shaped tools and weapons from it. (See collection at French Lake Pavilion). The French fur traders called it "Lac des Couteaux" and, on one old map, it is called Knife-stone Lake. Whether in Ojibwe, French, or English, the presence of this rock is noted.

In some instances the Ojibwe names are no longer used but the names were very descriptive or indicated the site's significance to the people living there.

## Jean Creek

Jean Creek was "Keh-wah-shaw-ong-un-gis-ti-gway-og", or "clear water over sand".

## Olifaunt Lake

Olifaunt Lake was "Gita-chewan-sagaigon" or "river goes around the lake".

## Poohbah Lake

Poohbah Lake was "Ga-to-ga-teg" or "place for getting bark for canoes".

# Silver Falls

Silver Falls was “Ga-wa-sid-ji-wani” or “river shining with the foam of rapids”.

## FRENCH NAMES

One of the most colourful and historically-significant eras in Quetico’s history was the fur trade that reached its peak in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Many of the early explorers and most of the voyageurs were French and they often gave French names to the lakes, rivers, and portages they travelled.

### Deux Rivières

Deux Rivières is a term meaning “two rivers” in French and refers to both a portage and a small river that leads into Upper Sturgeon Lake. In one fur trade journal, it was called the “portage of the two brooks”. Two brooks enter the Twin Lakes and two rivers enter Upper Sturgeon Lake.

### Doré Lake

Doré Lake, in one account, was believed to be named for the pickerel with its golden-eye and in another, for the golden sand on the beach.

### Lac la Croix

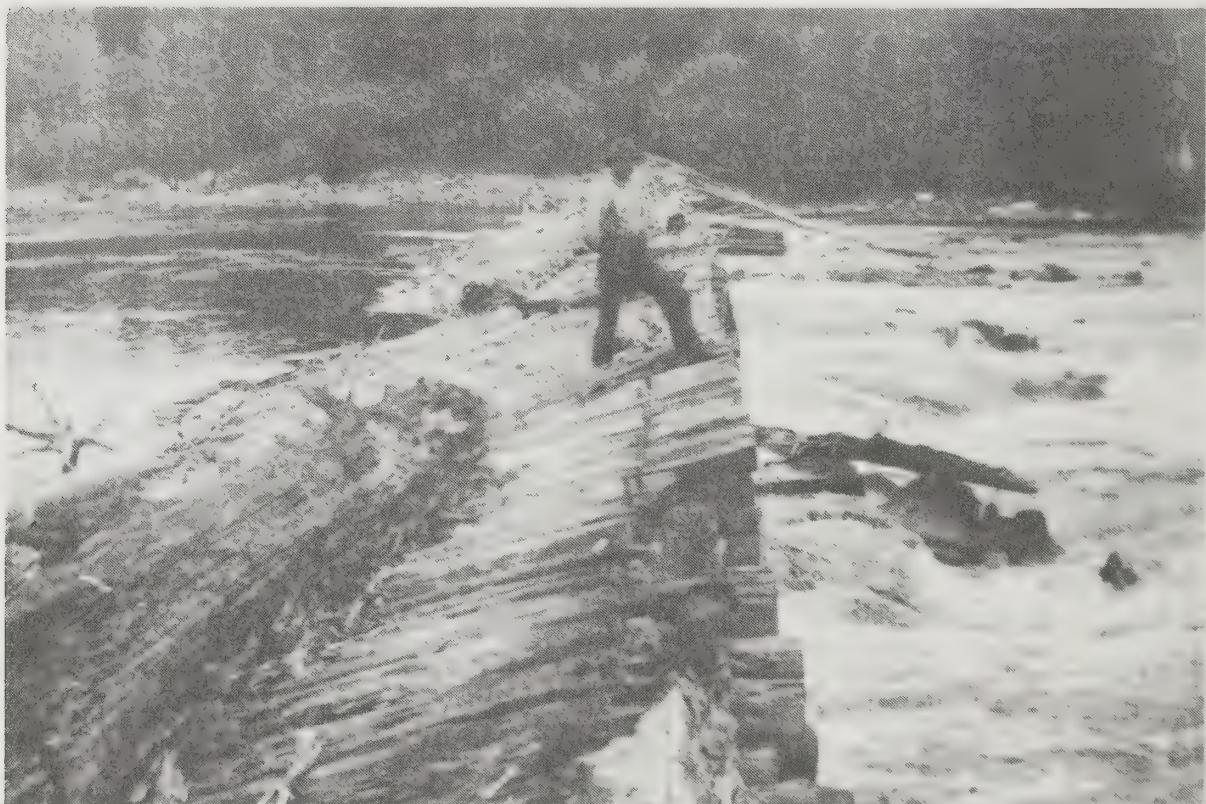
The Ojibwe name for Lac la Croix was Shing gook kon ni sa ga ig on – “lake surrounded by big pine”. In 1775, Alexander Henry writes “... a larger body of water than any hitherto traversed on this route; but its shape is so peculiar and its extensions or connections so numerous and various, that authorities differ in the implication of the name — can hardly be named from its own shape, for that is more like a broad, short ox-bow, but it may be called something like a cross, if we take into account its two most important connections: in the northeast with Rivière Maligne or Sturgeon River and in the north, about the middle of the lake, with Namakan River (alongside La Croix Indian village). — There is a picture rock on Lac la Croix, famous for its bright colours and accessibility.” An old cross is said to have stood on the island west of 92° and 15' meridian and was said to be a landmark to those entering from the Maligne River. The Abbe Prudhomme writing about La Verendrye relates the following

as the source of the name. Sieur de la Croix accompanied Jacques de Noyon on his expedition of 1688 to Rainy Lake. Returning, they were caught in a storm on the lake west of Isles des Chasseurs (Hunter Island). The canoe upset. Two companions clung to the birchbark craft, but La Croix was drowned. From this he says the lake received its name.

In 1831, Father G. A. Belcourt was on his way through this lake en route to Red River and wrote "Lac la Croix is called this because for a long time they have seen a cross there which had been carved by a Jesuit missionary whose zeal had brought him that far".

## Maligne River

Maligne is from the French, meaning "bad". The warning is justified, as many smashed canoes and drownings have been recorded. Near the top, there is the remains of an old dam, which was part of Dawson's plan to make this water route into a settler's route to the west. This dam was held with wooden pins and mortises made by axemen. It took 300 men to build it, and they were busy a whole winter. It was used to back up water at Deux Rivières, to accommodate a steam tug and barge Dawson planned on using. The boiler from a tug lies underwater, close to the first portage out of Sturgeon Lake.



*Dawson Dam at the top of the Maligne River, circa 1906.*

# Portage des Morts

Portage des Morts is now usually called Pine Portage, in reference to the tall pines that grew along the trail. In 1821 Nicholas Garry of the Hudson Bay Co. crossed this portage on July 25 and used its former name "at half past one we arrive at the Portage des Morts, which is about 150 paces and so called from the number of fatal accidents which have occurred and the melancholy truth of which the numerous crosses or burial places demonstrate. In 1823, Major Stephen H. Long wrote of it "Proceeded one and a half miles farther through a small lake called the Lake of the Dead from the death of a voyageur by an accident in passing." Joseph Delafield, who passed this way a month before Long, noted the recent grave of a Canadian at this portage.

Some of the French names that were used during the Fur Trade are known by their English equivalents.

## Bottle Lake

Bottle Lake was known to the voyageurs as "Flacon". As you enter the lake from the east it is almost like coming down the neck of a bottle.



*Curtain Falls.*

## Curtain Falls

Curtain is "Rideau" in French and throughout the fur trade era it was known by this name. In 1823 Joseph Delafield wrote that it was called by the French "Window Curtain Falls".

## French Portage

French Portage, a very difficult portage was formerly known as "Portage des Francais".

## Island Portage

All of the portages on the Maligne River were given French names. The last portage on the river was known as "Portage de l'Isle".

## PARK RANGERS

With Quetico's establishment, in 1909, as a Forest Reserve, and in 1913, as a Park, there came Park Rangers, who patrolled on snowshoes in the winter to protect the animals from poachers (moose too were threatened by their being used as food for the logging camps). The winter patrols continued until 1949. In the summer, Rangers patrolled by canoe, and protected the Park from fire.



*Old Cache Bay Cabin — Art Madsen, Albert Lemay, Bob Halliday, circa 1935.*

## Art Lake

Art Lake was named after Art Madsen, Quetico Ranger from 1934 - 1940. When Art finished working on the logging "gator" on Badwater, Wolseley and Namakan River in the spring of 1931, he, and a friend, Jock Richardson, went up to Saganaga Lake, where they planned to trap and live off the land. It was depression time and a road was being built to Saganaga, and they hoped to earn some money as guides. In November 1934, Art was sworn in as a Quetico Park Ranger. His patrol was out of McKenzie Lake from 1935 - 1938. Many of his experiences are recorded on tapes in Quetico's collections.

## Atkins Bay

Atkins Bay, in Kawnipi Lake, was named after Fred Atkins who spent many years cutting portages and chasing poachers in Quetico. He was a ranger for forty years and worked year round in the McKenzie Lake and Kawnipi Lake area from 1941 to 1949, at which time the winter patrols were discontinued. Known as a superb woodsman, especially skilled at working with logs, he helped build the log ranger cabins on McKenzie and Sturgeon Lakes.

## Darby Lake

Darby Lake is just outside Quetico, and north of Beaverhouse. This lake is named after Bill Darby, who ranged on Basswood Lake from 1912 - 1917. In 1917, he was offered the job of Superintendent of Quetico at French Lake or Deputy Chief Ranger at Fort Frances. He was young at the time, and thought he would prefer the town life of Fort Frances, rather than the isolation of French Lake. His fire crew was jokingly called 'Darby's Dirty Dozen'. In 1979, at 89 years of age, he was the only Park Ranger surviving from the era before outboard motors and airplanes. He lived to see the silence of the wilderness return that year with the motor ban.



*Bob Halliday on Kawnipi, waiting for the ice to go out.*

## Halliday Lake

Bob Halliday came from the Isle of Mull, in Scotland, and became a Quetico Park Ranger, April 1, 1932, at French Lake Headquarters. He became a patrol Ranger in 1935 with partner, Tom Quinn. For many years, he ranged out of Mosquito Point cabin, south of Batchewaung Bay. With straw for a mattress, and candles for light, he found the winter nights long. It was dark by 5:00 p.m., and still dark at 7:30 a.m. Their patrols took them over 250 square miles of the park on snowshoes. They watched for poachers in the winter, cleared portages in spring and fall, and kept a sharp look-out for fires during the summer. In 1948, Bob and his wife were stationed at Cabin 16. They were there year-round, until 1957, when they returned to French Lake, at the north end of the Park. Bob retired in 1966, and continued to share his knowledge of the Park with all the present staff.

# Hurn Lake

Walt Hurn was a Quetico Ranger from 1917 - 1929. He came from England, where his father was a professional gardener. Stationed at Cabin 11, King Point, on Basswood Lake, he was known for the beautiful garden he created there. Sig Olson describes him for us: "Great spare shoulders bent desperately over a report, the rootlike fingers moving slowly across the page, with a tiny stub of a pencil all

but lost between them, fingers used to rocks and boulders, to ax work, and the heavy packs of portages". 'Someday', he'd say, 'I'm going to turn in my ranger's badge and head for merry England, buy me a little garden spot near the coast, and raise the prettiest flowers on the island'. I did not understand that what had made his lonely station different from any other in Quetico Park, and possibly in the whole of Canada, was a core of loyalty to another way of life that the wilds could never quite erase.

"Starting down at the beach, with its white sand and gravel and its two trim canoe rests, a cleanliness spread up over the point itself... The floor of the log cabin was always scrubbed snowy-white, and no paint or varnish was ever allowed to touch it ...We never dreamed of arriving, without having washed our torn wilderness outfits, and shaved our beards... You would never believe that a garden patch, up there in the wilds, meant very much, but it did more, in fact, than most of us ever cared to admit... Coming out of the bush, where all vegetation runs riot, to suddenly find clean gravel walks, vegetables in straight rows, and a profusion of flowers... sky blue of larkspur and delphinium, the burnt orange of poppies, and the crimson of hollyhocks and zinnias. Somehow, up there, those colours were a miracle... His creation, back in the wilds of the border country, was a bit of the beauty of the old England he had left behind."



*Walt Hurn and Ted Dettbarn at Fall Lake in the 1920s.*

## Lemay Lake

Lemay Lake was named after Albert "Frenchy" Lemay who was a park ranger from 1926 - 1940. He was half English and half French, and despite his small size he was renowned for his ability as a "packer" on the portages. On a cold night in November of 1933, while sleeping next to the fire, he rolled over in his slumber and his rubber boots caught on fire. By the time he awakened and removed his boots, his feet were badly burned. He recovered and went on to spend many more years in Quetico, mainly in the Cache Bay area.

## Payne Lake

Payne Lake was named in recognition of the years of park service by Gerry Payne, who began his career as a member of the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Programme of 1935, a forerunner of the present Junior Rangers. From 1935 - 1945, he worked in the summers as a seasonal fire ranger and in the winter as a logger. In 1945 he came on permanent staff as a Quetico Park Ranger. During the years from then until his retirement in 1976, he came to know the park extremely well. This was one of his favourite lakes.

## Rawn Lake

Rawn Lake was named after Lloyd Rawn, Quetico Superintendent from 1935 - 1948. Writing in 1943 he says, "In 1939 our District was practically stripped of all fur-bearing animals and moose but the war saved the situation. The District is again well-stocked, thanks to Quetico. What we need is more areas where game is really protected. We owe this to the next generation. It's their heritage and we have done little to conserve it".



*Park Rangers on winter patrol — Oscar Frederickson, Tom Quinn, Bob Halliday.*

## Shan Walshe Lake

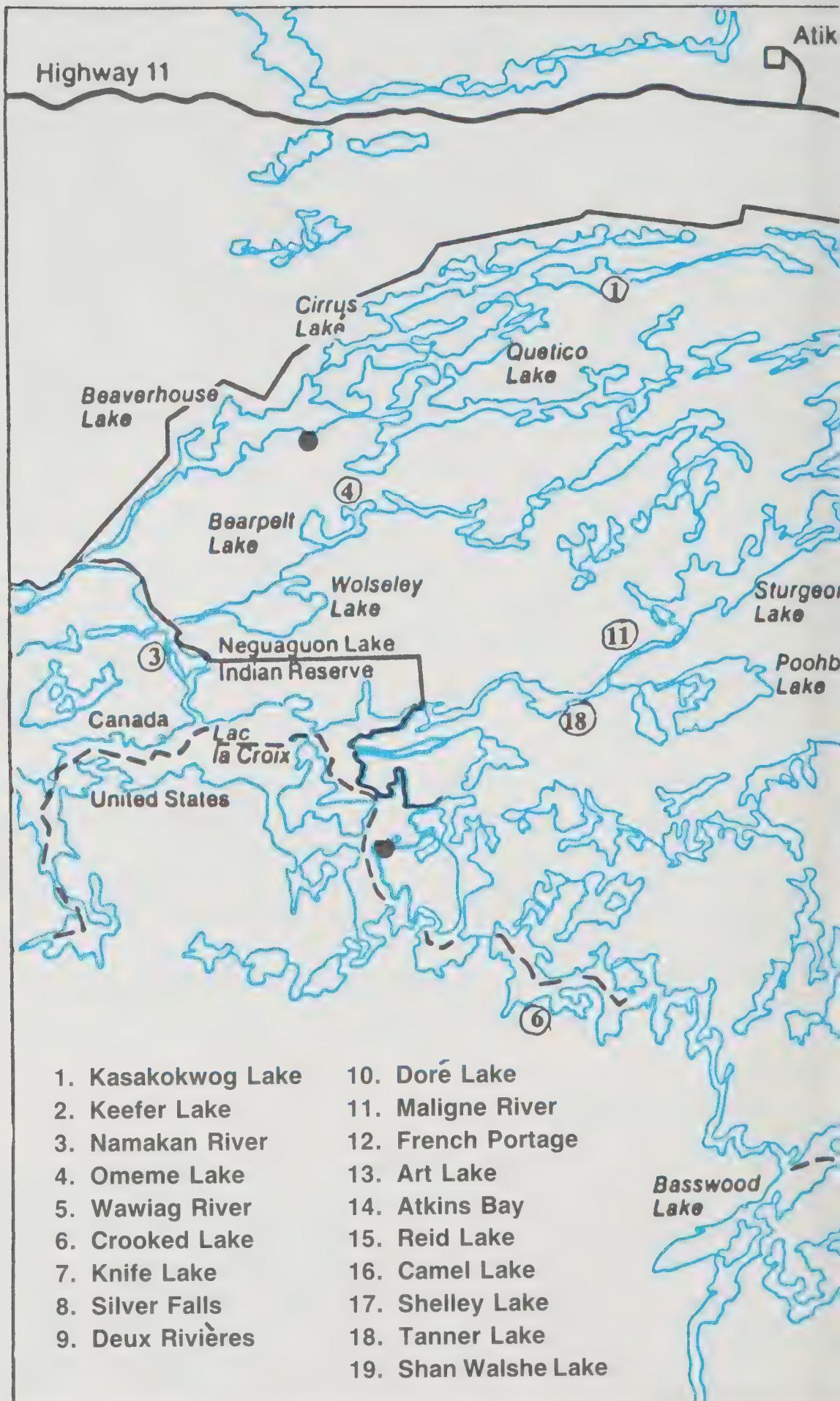
Shan Walshe was an outstanding naturalist who lived in Quetico from 1970 to 1991. His book "Plants of Quetico" enriches the canoe trips of everyone who uses it. His stories of Quetico delighted all of us.

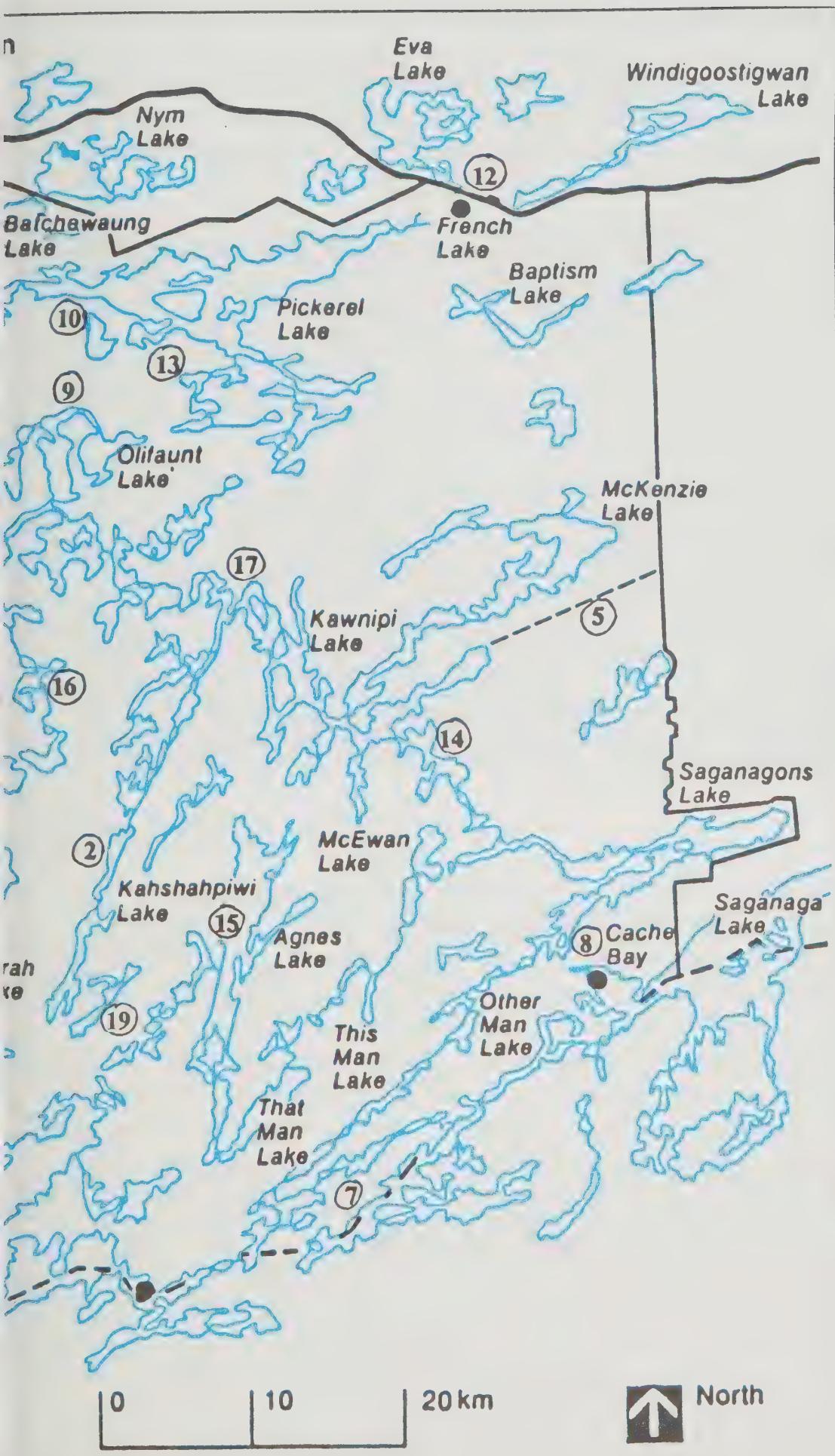
Bruce Litteljohn wrote of him "Perhaps more than anything, I'll remember Shan's courage, dedication and integrity. At great risk to himself, and in the face of those who didn't share his convictions, he stood up for Quetico and nature in general. He was his own man and he couldn't be scared off or tempted away from what he believed in".

This previously unnamed lake, remote, surrounded by stands of old pine, at the end of difficult portages was the kind of place that Shan loved.

## Valley Lake

Jess Valley was a Quetico Ranger who was described as one of the best woodsmen and an excellent carpenter and mechanic. He worked for the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests for 35 years beginning on September 11, 1928. Jess and a partner built the former ranger station, Cabin 16. One story from his days there concerns a bell. Jess could not get permission for his wife, Kay, to live there at first, so she lived in a cabin on the U.S. side of Basswood Lake. When Jess was at home, people could ring the bell at Cabin 16, and he would go over to sell permits.





# BUSH PILOTS

For the past fifty years, forest fire patrol, rescue of injured people, and the movement of supplies and persons was accomplished by bush planes to a large extent. Some of the bush pilots are remembered by lakes named in their memory.



*Pilot at Eva Lake.*

## Curtis Lake

Bruce Curtis was a pilot for Handberg's resort on Lac la Croix, and then for the Ministry of Natural Resources. He flew for many years in Quetico, and was known as a pilot of exceptional nerve and skill. In 1984, a lake which he often visited to fish was named in his honour.

## Ptolemy Lake

Ptolemy Lake was named after one of the original roster of Ontario Provincial Air Service bush pilots. Their work on fire detection and suppression, as well as their dangerous mercy flights is well known. The engines of these early planes would freeze up as late as May 24, and, if the frost should reach the oil supply, it would not start until thawed. "And so, a ritual for winter flying involved draining all the hot oil out of the engine every evening, at the end of a day's flying, and carrying it in a 'billy' can to a nice warm spot behind the stove of the cabin. Then, in the bitter cold morning a tarpaulin was draped over the engine and under there the

engineer worked for about three quarters of an hour. He used a Bunsen burner and kept alert to prevent the plane catching fire while the heat warmed the engine and melted the frost from the propeller hub. This was usually the last part of the engine to thaw. Then the oil was brought down from its place beside the stove, and poured back into the tank in the wing. The aircraft was ready then for another day." Bruce West, in *The Firebirds*, describes Hec Ptolemy "who, it was whispered, owed his rather peculiar surname to the fascinating fact, that, among his far distant ancestors, were the dynasty of Egyptian kings who bore the same name". In 1927 Hec Ptolemy was working from a base camp on Eva Lake.

## Reid Lake

Pat Reid joined the Ontario Provincial Air Service in 1924, the year of its inception. One of Canada's pioneers in aviation, he flew forest fire detection and suppression patrols in Ontario until 1927, then transferred to the Arctic in the year following. In 1973 he was named to Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame. "His mapping of this nation's northern frontier during pioneer air expeditions and the dedication of his skills to seeking lost airmen have been of outstanding benefit to Canadian aviation. As a pilot he was without fear and twice lived to read his own obituary when the world gave him up for lost."

## Swartman Lake

Gifford Swartman was one of the first bush pilots in Northwestern Ontario. In the summer of 1929, he flew 889 hours fighting fires. There were few airplanes or bush pilots then, and in a bad fire year the pilots were exceptionally busy.

In 1929 Swartman and Reid were two of three fliers selected from the Provincial Air Service to go to Alaska and Siberia on a search for pilot Carl Ben Eielson. They were chosen because of their experience in operating under northern conditions. In February of that year Swartman flew Dr. G. L. Bell to isolated Indian settlements beyond Sioux Lookout. There was a severe flu epidemic and on more than one trip he flew through blinding snowstorms.

# FORESTERS AND LOGGERS

Early loggers cut the pine in the winter with two-man crosscut saws and horses dragged the logs out of the woods and on to the ice. In the spring, the logs were floated down the larger creeks and rivers and then pulled by steam gators across the lakes. Trucks carried the necessary supplies over the rugged terrain to the many logging camps. Some of the dams and log sluiceways are still visible in Quetico.

## Acheson Lake

Acheson Lake was named for Keith Acheson, a former District Forester in Kenora.

## Ballard Lake

Ernie Ballard was a Shevlin-Clarke bush camp foreman, who worked on Wolseley Lake.

## Delahey Lake

George Delahey was too young to go to war but he went anyway. That was to WWI with the eighth Canadian Mounted Infantry and he was always proud to be a Canadian. He graduated in 1929 from the first winter flying course of the Provincial Air Service at Sioux Lookout. In 1931 his Gypsy Moth flipped over on Rainy Lake after landing during a ferocious line squall. He had been wearing a life jacket and was picked up a short time later by some tourists. Meanwhile, a Hamilton aircraft piloted by Alf Hutton with Al Runceman, engineer, C.V. (Nip) Greer and District Forester J.V. Stewart arrived looking for Delahey who was reported late. They spotted the plane with the bottom of the floats bobbing in the waters below. Hutton flew closer and while tightly circling he fell into a stall and crashed. Everyone in the Hamilton aircraft was killed.

In 1934 Delahey was appointed District Forester at Fort Frances. This forester/pilot brought changes to the lives of the Quetico rangers. Now their winter supplies could be flown in, poacher's tracks could be seen from the air and fire protection improved. George Delahey spent a lifetime with the Department of Lands and Forests. He supervised Quetico Park in his position as District Forester from 1934 - 1940 and 1946 - 1954. Many canoeists find solitude on this lake in the very centre of the park. Before

he died in August 1981, Mr. Delahey told his niece that he was pleased and honoured to know that a lake had been named after him.

## Gratton Lake

Ernie Gratton worked as a camp foreman for Shevlin-Clarke in the 1920s.

## Lakin Lake

B.S. Lakin was the general manager of Shevlin-Clarke in the 1920s.

## Malone Lake

Malone was the superintendent of Shevlin-Clarke in the 1930s.

## SURVEYORS

The following lakes were given the names of individuals who served as surveyors in Quetico:

## Magie Lake

Bill Magie came into the boundary waters area in 1909 and later worked there until his death in 1982. He was part of the boundary survey project in the 1920s. Later he guided in the B.W.C.A. and Quetico for many years. "A Wonderful Country" preserves the stories he told around many a campfire. He loved the Quetico/BWCA wilderness and fought to preserve it. In 1979 he was honoured with a bronze plaque on a lakeshore rock at the edge of the wilderness which reads: 'Think on this land of lakes and forests, It cannot survive Man's greed, Without Man's selfless dedication'.

## McDougall Lake

A. H. McDougall of the engineering firm of Russell, McDougall and Russell of Port Arthur surveyed in the Man Chain in 1888.

## Ross Lake

Ross Lake was named after R. I. Ross, Dominion Land Surveyor, who received instructions May 8, 1875 regarding surveys of Indian Reserves, adjacent to Quetico. In company of an Indian sent by the chiefs, he began his assignment in 1877.

## Bell Lake

Bell Lake was named after Dr. Robert Bell, who was the Director of the Canadian Geological Survey from 1884 to 1917. In 1872 - 1873 his report of the country between Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg was published by the Geological Survey.

## Keefer Lake

Keefer Lake was named after Harold Keefer, who was a Crown Lands Agent in Thunder Bay in 1909.

## WORLD WAR I SOLDIERS

In 1929, both the American and Canadian Legions suggested "that as much as is feasible of the Rainy Lake watershed be set aside for conservation purposes in the name of peace, and dedicated as a memorial to the servicemen of both countries". George Delahey proposed in 1939 that lakes in the Rainy River District be named after soldiers from the district who returned from World War I. Following is a list of soldiers who's names were given to Quetico Lakes: Andrews, Belaire, Crawford, Cushing, Deacon, Devine, Drake, Fluker, Lindsay, Montgomery, Otton, Tario, Tubman, and Wilbur.

## WOMEN'S NAMES

Agnes, Louisa, Sarah, Jean and Isabella are five of the most picturesque lakes in Quetico. However, there are hardly any clues to the origins of the women's names given to various lakes in Quetico. Agnes Lake appears on a map from 1866, Sarah Lake was named in 1891, and Louisa and Jean are shown on maps by 1913. With men isolated, while working in the bush, the logging era is probably remembered by the lakes the loggers named after women. These are: Alice Lake, Bernice Lake, Elizabeth Lake, Fran Lake, Isabella Lake, Jean Lake, Joyce Lake, Louisa Lake, Maria Lake, Marj Lake, Nan Lake, Pauleen Lake and Suzanette Lake.

# PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Quetico lies in a transition zone between the deciduous forests to the south and the predominantly coniferous forests to the north; therefore, a wide variety of both plants and animals abound in Quetico. This diversity is reflected in the many plant and animal names in the park.

## Basswood Lake

Basswood Lake comes from "Bassi-minan-sag" or "Lake of dried berries". It was spelled "Bassimenan" by N. H. Winchell and "Bassemenani" by Gilfillan, who translated it "Dried Blueberry Lake". The first syllable may have suggested the English name "Basswood". The French called it "Lac Bois Blanc" and the editor of the diaries of Alexander Henry the Younger explains that "Bois Blanc" is a French name of *Tilia Americana* often translated "Whitewood" (the wood is very white). But the English name of *Tilia Americana* is Basswood and some do grow along the south shore of the lake. Is there confusion with the Ojibwe name? or the French name?

On July 27, in the early 1800s Alexander Henry writes from Lac Bois Blanc — "Rain until 10:00. At 11:00, four more canoes from Rainy Lake with Athabasca packs. At 1:00 p.m., Roderick McKenzie in a light canoe two days from Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake) expecting to reach Grand Portage on the 29th. Women brought big huckleberries (blueberries). Alexander Mackenzie, in his published journals of 1801, writes Lac Bois Blanc, "but, I think, improperly so called as the natives name it the 'Lac Passeau Minac Sagaigan' or 'Lake of dry berries'. Before smallpox ravaged this country, and completed what the Sioux, in their warfare, had gone far to accomplish, the destruction of its inhabitants, the population was very numerous; this was also a favourite part, where they made their canoes, etc.; the lake abounding in fish, the country around it being plentifully supplied with various kinds of game, and the rocky ridges that form the boundaries of water, covered with a variety of berries. When the French were in possession of this country, they had several trading establishments on the islands and banks of this lake. Since that period, the few people remaining, who were of the Algonquin nation, could hardly find subsistence; game having become so scarce, that they depended principally for food upon fish and wild rice, which grows spontaneously in these parts." On July 22, 1823, J. Delafield of the Boundary Survey referred to it as "Lac Bois Blanc". Just to add more confusion, could "Bois Blanc" refer to the white of the birch trees and naming of Birch Lake.

## Beaver Lake

The fur trade was, to a large extent, dependent upon the value of the beaver pelt. This lake is located just off the main voyageur route along the southern boundary of the Park.

## Fern Lake

Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) grows in profusion around the shore of this lake. A more southern fern, it nears the northern limit of its range in Quetico, where it is found close to running water (a richer and warmer habitat).

## Lilypad Lake

Both yellow and white water lilies grown in profusion in the shallow bays of this lake.

## Lynx Lake

The lynx is near the southern limit of its range in Quetico. A solitary, secretive creature, it is very seldom seen by humans.

## Red Pine Lake

Many large red pine were logged in this area in the 1920s and 1930s. Significant numbers of mature red and white pine are still found in Quetico.

## Rice Bay

Wild rice grows in this shallow, productive bay of Lac la Croix.



*Lynx – photo courtesy of Stephen J. Krasemann.*

# GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The topography of Quetico was altered greatly by the glaciers that scarred the area, stripped away the existing soils, and gouged and scored the underlying bedrock. The resulting landscape was literally a "land of rock and water".

## Badwater Lake

Loggers who worked in this area in the 1920s and 1930s say that this lake was named because of the swampy taste of the water.

## Bearpelt Lake

The lake was named so because from the air, this lake resembles the shape of a bear pelt.

## Boulder Lake

This was named because of the many large, exposed boulders on the shore of this lake.

## Camel Lake

The east shoreline of this lake is in the shape of the camel's head and back.

## Cigar Lake

This cigar-shaped island is located in North Bay of Basswood Lake.

## Darky Lake

This lake was named Darky because the water is relatively dark coloured and it was, in fact, called Darkwater Lake on a 1913 map.



## Emerald Lake

The water in this lake is a beautiful green colour, probably because of the lime in the area.

## Iron Lake

This lake was originally named because of the iron that was thought to be in the area.

## Jasper Lake

There is iron along the shores of the lake with an occurrence of jasper, a red, opaque rock, associated with iron formation rock. Jasper also occurs on Knife and Emerald Lakes.

## Little Rock Lake

This lake lies adjacent to Plough Lake, which was known as Big Rock Lake on a 1929 map. Both lakes display a lot of exposed rock along the shores.

## Swamp Lake

It appears to be named after the swampy western end of the lake.

## OTHER INTERESTING NAMES

### Anubis Lake

An Egyptian god of the underworld, "Anubis" is a jackal that leads the dead to their destinations.

### Black Robe Portage

Situated between Lac la Croix and McAree Lake. Remembered by an Ojibwe family at Lac la Croix is the story of a priest in black being met on this portage. One such priest was Father Albert Lacombe known as the "Black Robe Voyageur". Years before, his grand uncle had gone into the "Pays d'en Haut" and his mother was a descendant of a French maiden carried into captivity over a hundred years earlier by an Ojibwe chief.

She bore him two sons before her voyageur uncle stole her and the boys from a camp at Sault Ste. Marie. One of the boys was an ancestor. (See #14 Bibliography) Father Lacombe was working out of Kenora in 1880 - 1881, and travelled hundreds of miles with an Indian guide, visiting Indian camps in the back country.

## Bonhomme Portage, Sauvage Portage

These two portages are named after Joe Meany and Eugene Tetrault, "Sauvage" and "Bonhomme", respectively. Joe and Gene were partners in the 1964 canoe race between Atikokan and Ely and set a record time of 38 hours, 50 minutes and 25 seconds for the round trip. They spent twelve days prior to the race clearing the new portages. Sauvage runs south from Fern Lake to an unnamed lake and Bonhomme runs south from that unnamed lake to Alice Lake. Joe Meany and his wife Vera have been the rangers at the Lac la Croix ranger station since 1971.

## Brent Lake

In 1913, it was aptly named Infinity Lake.

## Chatterton Lake

Chatterton Lake and Chatterton Falls may be named after Thomas Chatterton, an English poet. He led a tumultuous and impoverished life and committed suicide in 1779 at the age of seventeen. Only one of his poems was published in his lifetime, but, after his death, his collected works were published and both Keats and Shelley were said to be admirers of his poetry.

## Conmee Lake

This lake was named after James Conmee, Member of Provincial Parliament (1892). In 1881, he established a saw and planing mill at Port Arthur's #5 dock. In 1884 he set up the first electric lights in the area for this mill, and the first telephone line between his mill and the main establishments in town.

## Cutty Lake, Sark Lake

These lakes commemorate a clipper ship with an acre of sail, which flew the ocean trade routes at 17 knots — or is it to commemorate the whiskey named after the ship?

## Eastbend Island

The two main voyageur routes through Quetico converged near Eastbend Island on Lac la Croix. From this island, you “bend to the east” to find the mouth of the Maligne River.

## Hunter Island

Situated between the international border and the water flowing from Saganaga Lake to Sturgeon, and down the Maligne River to Lac la Croix, is an area known as Hunter Island. On a very early map, it bore the French name “Ile des Chasseurs”. In Dr. McLaughlin’s Journal from Rainy Lake Post in 1823, he referred to one family group of 10 - 12 men and women called Hunter of Sturgeon Lake who hunted on lands where five families of “the Rats of Mille Lacs” had hunted before they died of starvation 10 years earlier (HBCB:105/a/3). He also writes of one small band, sons of the deceased Chasseur (Hunter). They were said to trap between Rainy Lake and Mille Lacs to the northeast, but in (late) winter they were reported to trap nearer Sturgeon Lake, then, in spring, came toward Rainy Lake to live on sturgeon and to dry some for the summer (HBCB:105/a/9). Several Indians of “the hunter tribe” were reported at Rainy Lake post in 1817 - 1818. (HBCB:105/e/6).

During the negotiations to establish the border, Americans and Canadians tried to prove that the “usual route” to the west was farther north (Americans) or further south (Canadians). The American claim would have put Hunter Island inside the boundary of the United States.

## Keats Lake

John Keats was born on October 3, 1795, and died of tuberculosis in 1821, at the age of 25. In his short but prolific life, he wrote many poems that have become classics in English poetry. Two of his many poems were “Isabella” and “The Eve of St. Agnes”; however, it is not known if there is any correlation between Isabella Lake and Agnes Lake and these poems.

Keats wanted to have “Here lies one whose name is writ in water” engraved on his tombstone and it is ironic that in Quetico his name is indeed “writ in water”.

## McIntyre Lake

Named after John McIntyre who was an Indian agent from Fort William who paid treaty in Quetico in 1893. As a young man, he accompanied Sir George Simpson on his trip around the world in 1841. Later in his life, he became a fur trade factor at Fort William and worked there until it closed.

## McNaught Lake

This was the favourite fishing lake of Hugh McNaught, a tourist from Chicago. He camped along the shores of the lake and stayed there most of the summer in the 1920s and 1930s.

## Monument Portage

In the journals from the fur trade era, this portage was called Prairie Portage. While conducting the survey of the boundary in 1823, Major Delafield described the portage: “Passing from Lake Saganaga proceeded over a small lake, called Lake l’Prairie, now Swamp Lake, to Portage l’Prairie which take their name from a little marsh at the east end of the portage. The portage itself is rocky and the compact greenstone again occurs, rising about 20 feet on the portage track.” It has been called Monument Portage since monuments were erected to identify the international boundary that follows the portage trail.

## Nym Lake

Earlier names for this lake were Pine Lake in the 1890s and Island Lake on maps from 1913 to 1930. Nym is one of the characters in Shakespeare’s “Merry Wives of Windsor”. He has been described as “...an amusing creature of whimsy, who is in fact a thief and a swindler”.

## Orion Lake

Anyone who has ever travelled at night over a winter lake in Quetico, has seen the brilliance of the stars. Orion, the Hunter, is conspicuous, because a rectangle forming the Hunter's torso is bounded by bright stars. From Orion's belt hangs a faint sword containing a great nebula. In the summer sky to the south, passes the fishhook shape of Scorpius the Scorpion which bit Orion, causing his death. Sagittarius is shooting the scorpion. So Orion (a winter constellation) cannot be seen, when Scorpius and Sagittarius are in the sky.

## Ossian Lake

There is a legendary Gaelic bard of the third century, whose home, Ossian's Cave, lies high upon a mountain (Aonach Dubh) in the very beautiful valley of Glencoe. Who brought the name here?

## Polaris Lake

The two outer stars of the bowl of the Big Dipper (in the northern sky) point to Polaris, the North Star, and it, in turn, is the tail star of the Little Dipper. From this lake, close to the International Border, Quetico stretches northwards.

## Poohbah Lake, Yum Yum Lake, Koko Falls

Gilbert and Sullivan first produced "The Mikado" on March 14, 1885. By 1896 the name of one of the play's characters, "Poohbah", was given to a large lake south of Sturgeon Lake. In the play, "Ko Ko", the high executioner of Titipu, married "Yum Yum", one of the three gentle, maiden sisters. Koko Falls, on the Falls Chain in the south-east section of the Park, and Yum Yum Lake, just north of Basswood Lake, recall these characters.

## Prairie Portage

During the fur trade, this portage was known as "Gross Portage des Bois Blanc". David Thompson, surveyor and fur trader, called the portage "Great Whitewood Carrying Place" and, on the sixteenth of August, 1797, noted that a dwelling had burned near the portage.

## Shelley Lake

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born in 1792 and went on to become one of England's most honoured and influential poets. He drowned in 1822, at the age of thirty. His body was burned and his ashes carried to Rome and placed beside the grave of Keats.

## Tanner Lake

John Tanner was a white boy, adopted into an Ojibwe family when he was about ten years old. He lived with them for 30 years, travelling in this area, and on to the Red River. In 1823, he was coming up the Maligne River with his Indian wife and two daughters, in an effort to take the girls out to go to school. Somewhere in the river (believed to be at Tanner's Rapids), he was shot by an Indian, and left to die. The mother deserted him to take the girls back to their Indian home. In great pain, Tanner managed to wade out in the rapids the next day when he heard voices from a canoe in the water above. These men of the Hudson's Bay Co. finally recognized him and took him to Rainy Lake Post, where he was cared for. These events are told in the journals of several expeditions passing over this water route that summer.

## Wetasi Island

The name sounded like an Ojibwe word so it came as a surprise to learn from Quetico Superintendent Fergy Wilson that his portage crew had named it one summer after camping there on numerous trips with wet asses!

## Wolseley Lake

In May of 1870, 1400 troops were sent by the Canadian government to quell a Metis uprising in the vicinity of Fort Garry. Lieutenant-Colonel Garnet Wolseley was in charge of the Red River Expedition that went from Prince Arthur's Landing through Quetico to Fort Garry. The Dawson route was still being constructed and because of the ruggedness of the trail and great difficulties on the portages, the troops did not arrive at Fort Garry until the rebellion was over.

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